

Department of External Affairs



Canada

Ministère des Affaires extérieures

125 Sussex Drive,  
Ottawa, Ontario, K1A 0G2

August 19, 1982

GPS-1836

Mr. Ross Shotton,  
6018 Cherry Street,  
Halifax, N.S.  
B3H 2K3

Dear Mr. Shotton,

Your letter of June 8 to the Prime Minister concerning Indonesian policies in East Timor has been referred to me for reply.

Let me begin by emphasizing that there is considerable uncertainty surrounding the events which have transpired in East Timor, beginning with the precipitous withdrawal of Portuguese sovereignty in 1975. The Portuguese departure resulted in a civil war among the various East Timorese political factions (some of which were pro-Indonesian) which in turn led to Indonesian military intervention and the eventual integration of the territory into Indonesia.

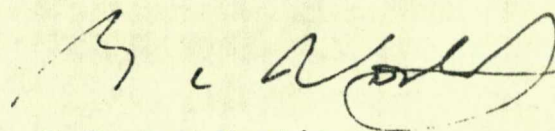
Estimates of the number of casualties caused by the hostilities in East Timor vary greatly. There is no question, however, that the Timorese people suffered from these events and from the aftermath of destabilization and disorganization which affected agricultural production and medical care in the territory. Only concerted action by relief agencies such as the International Committee of the Red Cross and the Catholic Relief Services averted an even greater tragedy. Canada has already contributed \$225,000 to these relief efforts.

Since 1976 East Timor has been a province of the Republic of Indonesia. Although Canada has not endorsed the manner in which this came about and the Prime Minister's

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visit to Indonesia will not change this position, the Canadian Government is encouraged by the efforts the Indonesians are now making to improve the social and economic well-being of the people of East Timor.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'M.G. von Nostitz', with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

M.G. von Nostitz  
Director  
South and Southeast Asia  
Division